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---

JEREMY TAYLOR'S  
HOLY LIVING AND DYING.













HOLY LIVING AND DYING:  
WITH PRAYERS

CONTAINING

THE WHOLE DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN,  
*AND THE PARTS OF DEVOTION FITTED TO ALL OCCASIONS,  
AND FURNISHED FOR ALL NECESSITIES.*

BY

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
AND TRULY NOBLE  
RICHARD LORD VAUGHAN,

EARL OF CARBERRY, KNIGHT OF THE HONOURABLE  
ORDER OF THE BATH.

---

MY LORD,

I HAVE lived to see religion painted upon banners, and thrust out of churches; and the temple turned into a tabernacle, and that tabernacle made ambulatory, and covered with skins of beasts and torn curtains; and God to be worshipped, not as he is, "the Father of our Lord Jesus," (an afflicted Prince, the King of sufferings,) nor as the "God of peace," (which two appellatives God newly took upon him in the New Testament, and glories in for ever,) but he is owned now rather as "The Lord of hosts," which title he was pleased to lay aside, when the kingdom of the gospel was preached by the Prince of peace. But when religion puts on armour, and God is not acknowledged by his New Testament titles, religion may have in it the power of the sword, but not the power of godliness; and we may complain of this to God, and amongst them that are afflicted, but we have no remedy but what we must expect from the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and the returns of the God of peace. In the mean time, and now that religion pretends to stranger actions upon new principles; and men are apt to prefer a prosperous error before an afflicted truth; and some will think they are religious enough if their worshippings have in them the prevailing ingredient; and the ministers of religion are so scattered that they cannot unite to stop the inundation, and from chairs or pulpits, from their synods or tribunals, chastise the iniquity of the error, and the ambition of evil guides, and the infidelity of the willingly seduced multitude; and that those few good people who have no other plot in their religion but to serve God and save their souls, do want such assistances of ghostly counsel as may serve their emergent needs, and assist their endeavours in the acquist of virtues, and relieve their dangers when they are tempted to sin and death; —I thought I had reasons enough inviting me to draw into one

body those advices which the several necessities of many men must use at some time or other, and many of them daily; that by a collection of holy precepts they might less feel the want of personal and attending guides, and that the rules for conduct of souls might be committed to a book which they might always have; since they could not always have a prophet at their needs, nor be suffered to go up to the house of the Lord to inquire of the appointed oracles.

I know, my Lord, that there are some interested persons who add scorn to the afflictions of the church of England; and, because she is afflicted by men, call her "forsaken of the Lord;" and because her solemn assemblies are scattered, think that the religion is lost, and the church divorced from God, supposing Christ (who was a man of sorrows) to be angry with his spouse when she is like him [for that is the true state of the error]; and that he who promised his Spirit to assist his servants in their troubles, will, because they are in trouble, take away the Comforter from them; who cannot be a comforter but while he cures our sadnesses, and relieves our sorrows, and turns our persecutions into joys, and crowns, and sceptres. But, concerning the present state of the church of England, I consider, that because we now want the blessings of external communion in many degrees, and the circumstances of a prosperous and unafflicted people, we are to take estimate of ourselves with single judgments, and every man is to give sentence concerning the state of his own soul by the precepts and rules of our Lawgiver, not by the after-decrees and usages of the church; that is, by the essential parts of religion, rather than by the uncertain significations of any exterior adherences: for, though it be uncertain when a man is the member of a church whether he be a member to Christ or no, because in the church's net there are fishes good and bad; yet we may be sure that, if we be members of Christ, we are of a church to all purposes of spiritual religion and salvation; and in order to this, give me leave to speak this great truth —

That man does certainly belong to God, who, 1. Believes and is baptized into all the articles of the Christian faith, and studies to improve his knowledge in the matters of God, so as may best make him to live a holy life. 2. He that, in obedience to Christ, worships God diligently, frequently, and constantly, with natural religion; that is, of prayer, praises, and thanksgiving. 3. He that takes all opportunities to remember Christ's death by a frequent sacrament, (as it can be had,) or else by inward acts of understanding, will, and memory, (which is the spiritual communion,) supplies the want of the external rite. 4. He that lives chastely; 5. And is merciful; 6. And despises the world, using it as a man, but never suffering it to rifle a duty; 7. And is just in his dealing, and diligent in his calling. 8. He that is humble in his spirit; 9. And obedient to government; 10. And content in his fortune and employment. 11. He that does his duty because he loves God; 12. And

especially if, after all this, he be afflicted, and patient, or prepared to suffer affliction for the cause of God : the man that hath these twelve signs of grace and predestination, does as certainly belong to God, and is his son as surely, as he is his creature.

And if my brethren in persecution and in the bonds of the Lord Jesus can truly show these marks, they shall not need be troubled that others can show a prosperous outside, great revenues, public assemblies, uninterrupted successions of bishops, prevailing armies, or any arm of flesh, or less certain circumstance. These are the marks of the Lord Jesus, and the characters of a Christian : this is a good religion ; and these things God's grace hath put into our powers, and God's laws have made to be our duty, and the nature of men and the needs of commonwealths have made to be necessary. The other accidents and pomps of a church are things without our power, and are not in our choice : they are good to be used when they may be had, and they help to illustrate or advantage it ; but if any of them constitute a church in the being of a society and a government, yet they are not of its constitution, as it is Christian and hopes to be saved.

And now the case is so with us that we are reduced to that religion which no man can forbid ; which we can keep in the midst of a persecution ; by which the martyrs, in the days of our fathers, went to heaven : that by which we can be servants of God, and receive the spirit of Christ, and make use of his comforts, and live in his love, and in charity with all men : and they that do so cannot perish.

My Lord, I have now described some general lines and features of that religion which I have more particularly set down in the following pages ; in which I have neither served nor disserved the interest of any party of Christians, as they are divided by uncharitable names from the rest of their brethren ; and no man will have reason to be angry with me for refusing to mingle in his unnecessary or vicious quarrels ; especially while I study to do him good by conducting him in the narrow way to heaven, without intricating him in the labyrinths and wild turnings of questions and uncertain talkings. I have told what men ought to do, and by what means they may be assisted ; and in most cases I have also told them why ; and yet with as much quickness as I could think necessary to establish a rule, and not to engage in homily or discourse. In the use of which rules, although they are plain, useful, and fitted for the best and worst understandings, and for the needs of all men, yet I shall desire the reader to proceed with the following advices.

1. They that will with profit make use of the proper instruments of virtue, must so live as if they were always under the physician's hand. For the counsels of religion are not to be applied to the distempers of the soul as men used to take hellebore ; but they must

dwell together with the spirit of a man, and be twisted about his understanding for ever; they must be used like nourishment, that is, by a daily care and meditation; not like a single medicine, and upon the actual pressure of a present necessity: for counsels and wise discourses, applied to an actual distemper, at the best are but like strong smells to an epileptic person; sometimes they may raise him, but they never cure him. The following rules, if they be made familiar to our natures and the thoughts of every day, may make virtue and religion become easy and habitual; but when the temptation is present, and hath already seized upon some portions *of our consent, we are not so apt to be counselled, and we find no gust or relish in the precept: the lessons are the same, but the instrument is unstrung, or out of tune.*

2. In using the instruments of virtue, we must be curious to distinguish instruments from duties, and prudent advices from necessary injunctions; and if by any other means the duty can be secured, let there be no scruples stirred concerning any other helps: only if they can, in that case, strengthen and secure the duty, or help towards perseverance, let them serve in that station in which they can be placed. For there are some persons in whom the Spirit of God hath breathed so bright a flame of love, that they do all their acts of virtue by perfect choice and without objection, and their zeal is warmer than that it will be allayed by temptation; and to such persons mortification by philosophical instruments, as fasting, sackcloth, and other rudenesses to the body, is wholly useless; it is always a more uncertain means to acquire any virtue, or secure any duty; and if love hath filled all the corners of our soul, it alone is able to do all the work of God.

3. Be not nice in stating the obligations of religion; but where the duty is necessary, and the means very reasonable in itself, dispute not too busily whether, in all circumstances, it can fit thy particular; but "super totam materiam," upon the whole make use of it. For it is a good sign of a great religion, and no imprudence when we have sufficiently considered the substance of affairs, then to be easy, humble, obedient, apt, and credulous in the circumstances, which are appointed to us in particular by our spiritual guides, or, in general, by all wise men in cases not unlike. He that gives alms does best not always to consider the minutes and strict measures of his ability, but to give freely, incuriously, and abundantly. A man must not weigh grains in the accounts of his repentance; but for a great sin have a great sorrow, and a great severity; and in this take the ordinary advices, though, it may be, a less rigour might not be insufficient; ἀριθμολογία, or arithmetical measures, especially of our own proportioning, are but arguments of want of love and of forwardness in religion; or else are instruments of scruple, and then become dangerous. Use the rule heartily and enough, and there will be no harm in thy error if any should happen.

4. If thou intendest heartily to serve God, and avoid sin in any one instance, refuse not the hardest and most severe advice that is prescribed in order to it, though possibly it be a stranger to thee; for whatsoever it be, custom will make it easy.

5. When many instruments for the obtaining any virtue, or restraining any vice, are propounded, observe which of them fits thy person or the circumstances of thy need, and use it rather than the other; that by this means thou mayest be engaged to watch and use spiritual arts and observation about thy soul. Concerning the managing of which, as the interest is greater, so the necessities are more, and the cases more intricate, and the accidents and dangers greater and more importunate; and there is greater skill required than in the securing an estate, or restoring health to an infirm body. I wish all men in the world did heartily believe so much of this as is true; it would very much help to do the work of God.

Thus, my Lord, I have made bold by your hand to reach out this little scroll of cautions to all those, who, by seeing your honoured name set before my book, shall, by the fairness of such a frontispiece, be invited to look into it. I must confess it cannot but look like a design in me, to borrow your name and beg your patronage to my book, that if there be no other worth in it, yet at least it may have the splendour and warmth of a burning-glass, which, borrowing a flame from the eye of heaven, shines and burns by the rays of the sun its patron. I will not quit myself from the suspicion, for I cannot pretend it to be a present either of itself fit to be offered to such a personage, or any part of a just return; but I humbly desire you would own it for an acknowledgment of those great endearments and noblest usages you have past upon me; but so men in their religion give a piece of gum, or the fat of a cheap lamb, in sacrifice to Him that gives them all that they have or need; and unless He, who was pleased to employ your Lordship as a great minister of his providence, in making a promise of his good to me, the meanest of his servants, "that he would never leave me nor forsake me," shall enable me, by greater services of religion, to pay my great debt to your honour, I must still increase my score; since I shall now spend as much in my needs of pardon for this boldness, as in the reception of those favours by which I stand accountable to your Lordship in all the bands of service and gratitude; though I am, in the deepest sense of duty and affection,

My most honoured Lord,

Your Honour's most obliged

And most humble Servant,

JER. TAYLOR.





**THE**  
**RULE AND EXERCISES**  
**OF**  
**HOLY LIVING, &c.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE GENERAL INSTRUMENTS AND MEANS SERVING  
TO A HOLY LIFE, BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.**

It is necessary that every man should consider, that, since God hath given him an excellent nature, wisdom and choice, an understanding soul, and an immortal spirit; having made him lord over the beasts, and but a little lower than the angels; he hath also appointed for him a work and a service great enough to employ those abilities, and hath also designed him to a state of life after this, to which he can only arrive by that service and obedience. And therefore, as every man is wholly God's own portion by the title of creation, so all our labours and care, all our powers and faculties, must be wholly employed in the service of God, and even all the days of our life; that, this life being ended, we may live with him for ever.

Neither is it sufficient that we think of the service of God as a work of the least necessity, or of small employment, but that it be done by us as God intended it; and that it be done with great earnestness and passion, with much zeal and desire; that we refuse no labour: that we bestow upon it much time; that we use the best guides, and arrive at the end of glory by all the ways of grace, of prudence, and religion.

And, indeed, if we consider how much of our lives is taken up by the needs of nature; how many years are wholly spent, before we come to any use of reason; how many years more, before that reason is useful to us to any great purposes; how imperfect our discourse is made by our evil education, false

principles, ill company, bad examples, and want of experience; how many parts of our wisest and best years are spent in eating and sleeping, in necessary businesses and unnecessary vanities, in worldly civilities and less useful circumstances, in the learning arts and sciences, languages, or trades; that little portion of hours that is left for the practices of piety and religious walking with God, is so short and trifling, that, were not the goodness of God infinitely great, it might seem unreasonable or impossible for us to expect of him eternal joys in heaven, even after the well spending those few minutes which are left for God and God's service, after we have served ourselves and our own occasions.

And yet it is considerable, that the fruit which comes from the many days of recreation and vanity is very little; and, although we scatter much, yet we gather but little profit: but from the few hours we spend in prayer and the exercises of a pious life, the return is great and profitable; and what we sow in the minutes and spare portions of a few years, grows up to crowns and sceptres in a happy and a glorious eternity.

1. Therefore, although it cannot be enjoined, that the greatest part of our time be spent in the direct actions of devotion and religion, yet it will become, not only a duty, but also a great providence, to lay aside, for the services of God and the businesses of the Spirit, as much as we can; because God rewards our minutes with long and eternal happiness; and the greater portion of our time we give to God, the more we treasure up for ourselves; and "no man is a better merchant than he that lays out his time upon God, and his money upon the poor."

2. Only it becomes us to remember, and to adore God's goodness for it, that God hath not only permitted us to serve the necessities of our nature, but hath made them to become parts of our duty; that if we, by directing these actions to the glory of God, intend them as instruments to continue our persons in his service, he, by adopting them into religion, may turn our nature into grace, and accept our natural actions as actions of religion. God is pleased to esteem it for a part of his service,<sup>1</sup> if we eat or drink; so it be done temperately,

<sup>1</sup> Πυθομένου τινός, πῶς ἐστὶν ἐσθίειν ἀρεστῶς θεοῖς; εἰ δικαίως ἐστὶν, ἰσθῆ, καὶ εὐγνωμόνως, καὶ ἰσως, καὶ ἡσυχαστῶς, καὶ ταπεινῶς, οὐκ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρεστῶς τοῖς θεοῖς.—Arrian, Epict. l. i. c. 13.

and as may best preserve our health, that our health may enable our services towards him : and there is no one minute of our lives, (after we are come to the use of reason,) but we are or may be doing the work of God, even then when we most of all serve ourselves.

3. To which if we add, that in these and all other actions of our lives we always stand before God, acting, and speaking, and thinking in his presence, and that it matters not that our conscience is sealed with secrecy, since it lies open to God ; it will concern us to behave ourselves carefully, as in the presence of our Judge.

These three considerations, rightly managed, and applied to the several parts and instances of our lives, will be like Elisha stretched upon the child, apt to put life and quickness into every part of it, and to make us live the life of grace, and do the work of God.

I shall, therefore, by way of introduction, reduce these three to practice, and show how every Christian may improve all and each of these to the advantage of piety, in the whole course of his life ; that if he please to bear but one of them upon his spirit, he may feel the benefit, like an universal instrument, helpful in all spiritual and temporal actions.

#### SECT. I. *The first general Instrument of Holy Living, Care of our Time.*

HE that is choice of his time will also be choice of his company, and choice of his actions ; lest the first engage him in vanity and loss ; and the latter, by being criminal, be a throwing his time and himself away, and a going back in the accounts of eternity.

God hath given to man a short time here upon earth, and yet upon this short time eternity depends ; but so, that for every hour of our life (after we are persons capable of laws, and know good from evil) we must give account to the great Judge of men and angels. And this is it which our blessed Saviour told us, that we must account for every idle word ; not meaning, that every word which is not designed to edifica' on, or is less prudent, shall be reckoned for a sin ; but that the time which we spend in our idle talking and unprofitable discoursings, that time which might and ought to have been employed to spiritual and useful purposes, that is to be accounted for.